

## Healthcare sector: Processing of (medical) waste

### How do you process (medical) waste (e.g. in residential care centres, medical practices, triage centres)?

A number of wastes from the treatment of (suspected) covid-19 patients fall under non-hazardous waste:

- uncontaminated personal protective equipment such as gloves, masks, aprons, etc.;
- food leftovers;
- disposable curtains;
- paper and cardboard (including patients' newspapers and magazines);
- packaging materials;
- incontinence material;
- empty urine bags.

This type of waste can be collected together with the mixed industrial waste. Small quantities can be included in the municipal waste collection.

If you have the waste collected in a container, first put it in a bag. You must close it completely: no openings in the bag or waste that is sticking out.

Other waste from the treatment of (suspected) Covid-19 patients must first be separated into separate bins or other waste receptacles for 72 hours. Only then may you collect, dispose of and process it as non-hazardous waste. Specifically, disposable linen and care materials such as bandages, tissues and pads which could be contaminated with (small amounts of) blood and/or other body fluids.

Would it be difficult for you to organise such a quarantine for 72 hours? Then dispose of the material as hazardous medical waste via yellow barrels or other approved receptacles.

### How to collect in case of imminent shortage of receptacles for high-risk medical waste during the civil emergency situation?

Due to the impending shortage of medical drums and boxes for high-risk medical waste, alternative receptacles are allowed. In particular, alternative receptacles for high-risk medical waste that cannot be closed definitively may be used for the duration of a civil emergency provided that:

- 1° have been approved by the UN in accordance with the ADR guidelines;
- 2° have a Y-label for solids as prescribed for UN3291.

However, the containers must be closed with a latch ring or equivalent closure and measures must be taken to ensure that they cannot be opened easily.

Meanwhile, there are reports from the medical sector and from the sector of waste collectors and processors that there could even be a shortage of these alternative drums. For this reason, an additional alternative was provided which stipulates that the 'dry' RMA may be collected in plastic bags, which are placed in a UN roll container. However, the bags must be presented for collection sealed.

For Wallonia, it was also stipulated that solid high-risk medical waste may be collected in solid cardboard boxes of up to 120 litres, fitted with a plastic inner bag with double welded seams.

*This document was prepared on 23 April 2020 on the basis of the measures in force on that date.*